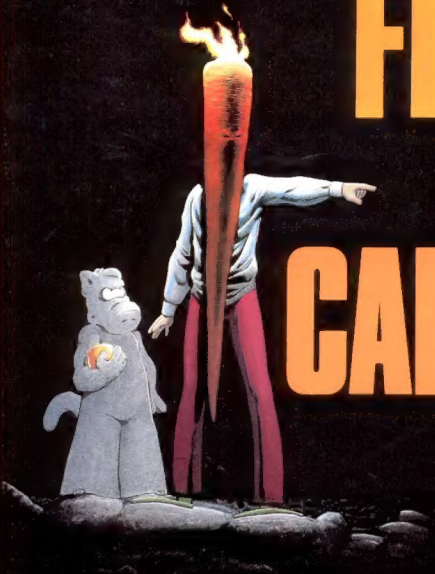
ISSN 0712-7774

$1.70 USA ● $2.00 CANADA ● £1 UK

CEREBUS

THIS FLAME THIS CARROT



104
NOV

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

We have reached a critical juncture in the evolution of the direct sales market. More publishers continue to start up even as the casualty figures climb. "Established" companies (anyone who has lasted a year or more) continue to expand and contract simultaneously, replacing poor-selling titles as fast as they can be cancelled, "spinning off" good-selling titles as if they were breeding rabbits.

The distributors (who, short months ago were castigating me for not allowing them to distribute High Society) heave a collective sigh of relief whenever they are not solicited for today's new "hot" title, grateful for any relief provided their over-taxed cash reserves.

Their (and the retailers') cash flow has become a central issue in our incestuous wee marketplace. The success I have had with selling High Society, Church & State and now Cerebus indicates that the money exists to support Independent Creativity at the consumer level. The competition between companies vying for their "fair share" of the fan buck has created a bottleneck at the distributor level and the misbegotten impression that we have fallen on hard times. 'Taint so, kids. What it has proved is that the Trickle-Up Theory doesn't work. The amount that has to be spent by each fan in each store to maintain even a status quo at the publishing level increases with each shipping week.

What must be faced by the distributors is that the Dream of Kings (Phil Seuling and Hal Schuster c. 1979 when Elfquest and Cerebus where prizes in a chess game, pawed over by these reprehensible "gentlemen" who sought each other's demise through exclusive distribution rights to titles) has died, but, more to the point The Dream of Princes has proved an equal, if not greater, folly.

In "demanding" that they be given all of a company's "product" (an ignominious term to which offensiveness they seem blithely ignorant) they have set themselves up for the next bow-and-turn of our farcical dance -- the high-priced reprint collection.

If they would encourage creative people to follow my own example and to distribute these collections by direct mail (ensuring, in the process, the financial security of these creators and their creations, a continuing supply of current material, an easing of their own financial burden, and a lower-priced collection/package for the fan) much of the madness which lies ahead might be avoided.

But they have learned nothing from the black-and-white implosion. Having been burned (some damaged irreparably) at the two dollar table, they have gathered their remaining grub stake and now endeavour to make a killing at the twenty-five dollar table.

Such monumental and pointlessly self-destructive foolishness would be funny were it not so dangerous.

CEREBUS

NO. 104 NOVEMBER 1987

DAVE SIM
President

KAREN McKIEL
Administrator

GERHARD
Backgrounds, cover-colour and tones

Circulation
29,000

CHURCH AND STATE
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 52 to Cerebus 56)
Aprés State

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 57 to Cerebus 63)
Back to Iest

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 64 to Cerebus 80)
Church and State

•

BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 81 to Cerebus 89)
The Sacred Wars

•

BOOK FIVE
(Cerebus 90 to Cerebus 101)
Astoria

•

BOOK SIX
(Cerebus 102 to Cerebus 106)
The Final Ascension

•

BOOK SEVEN
(Cerebus 107 to Cerebus 111)

•

CEREBUS IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY AARDVARK-VANAHEIM INC. PO BOX 1674 STN. C KITCHENER ONTARIO CANADA N2G 4R2

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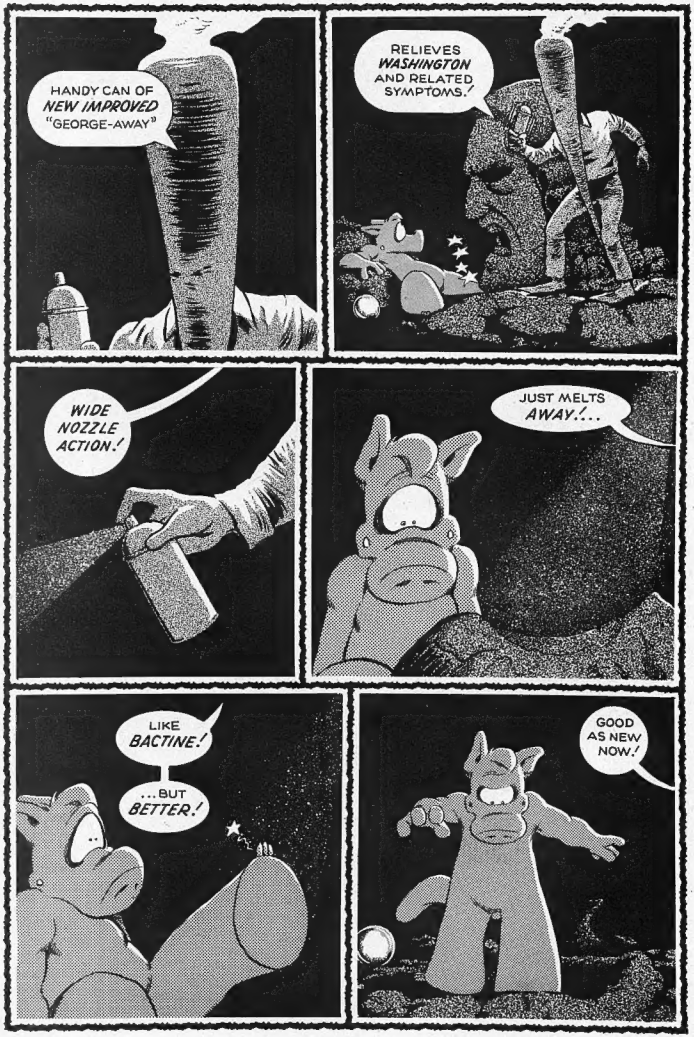
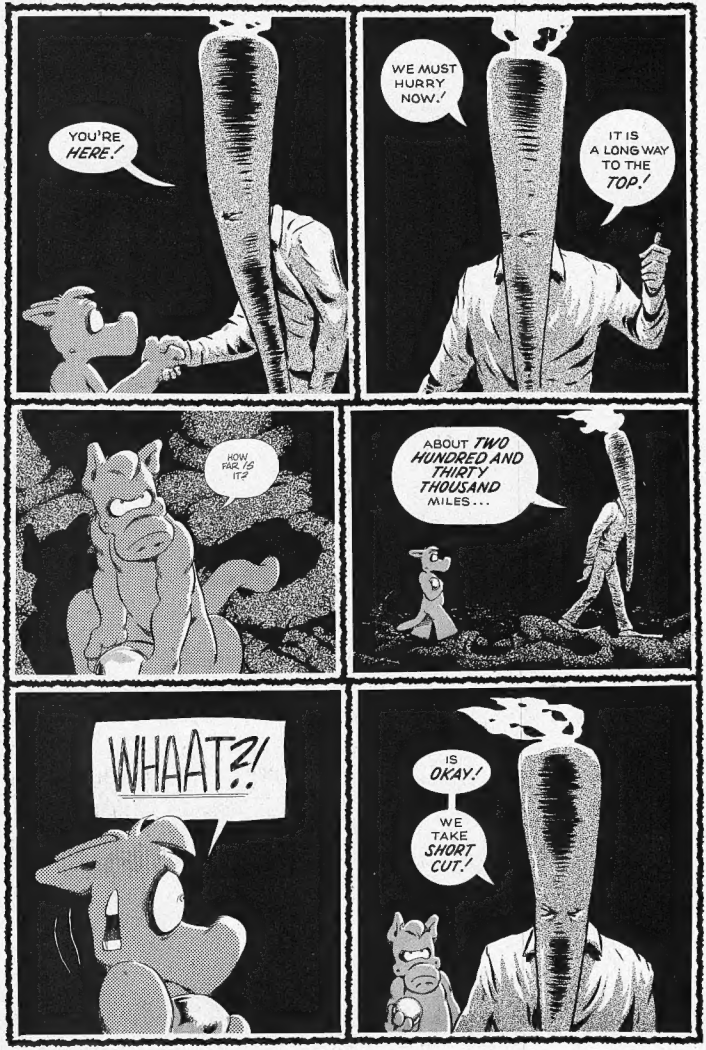
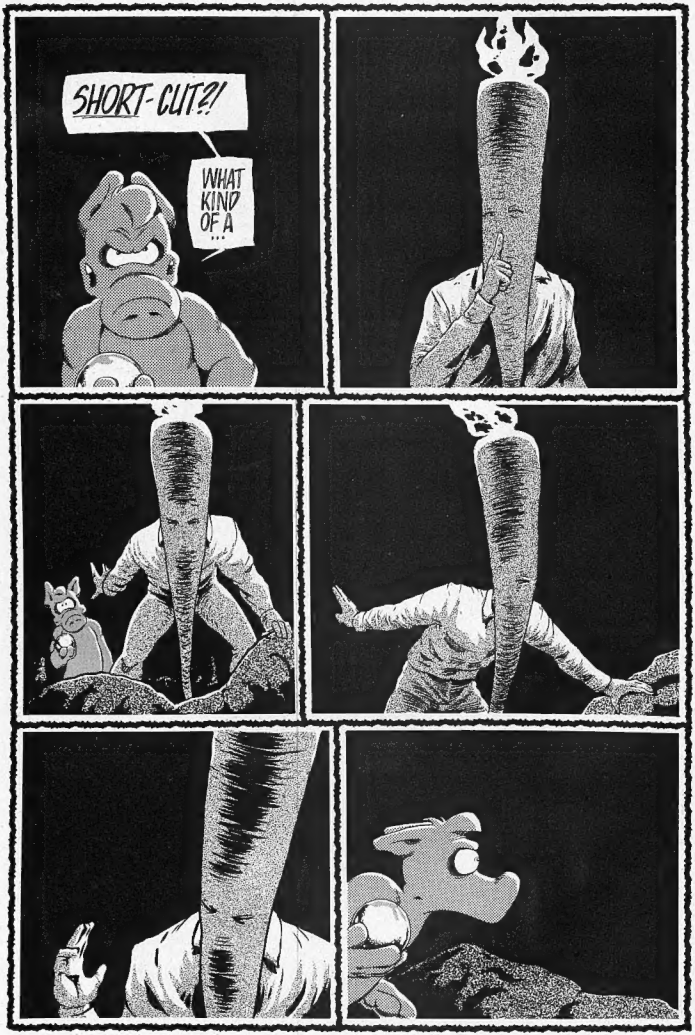
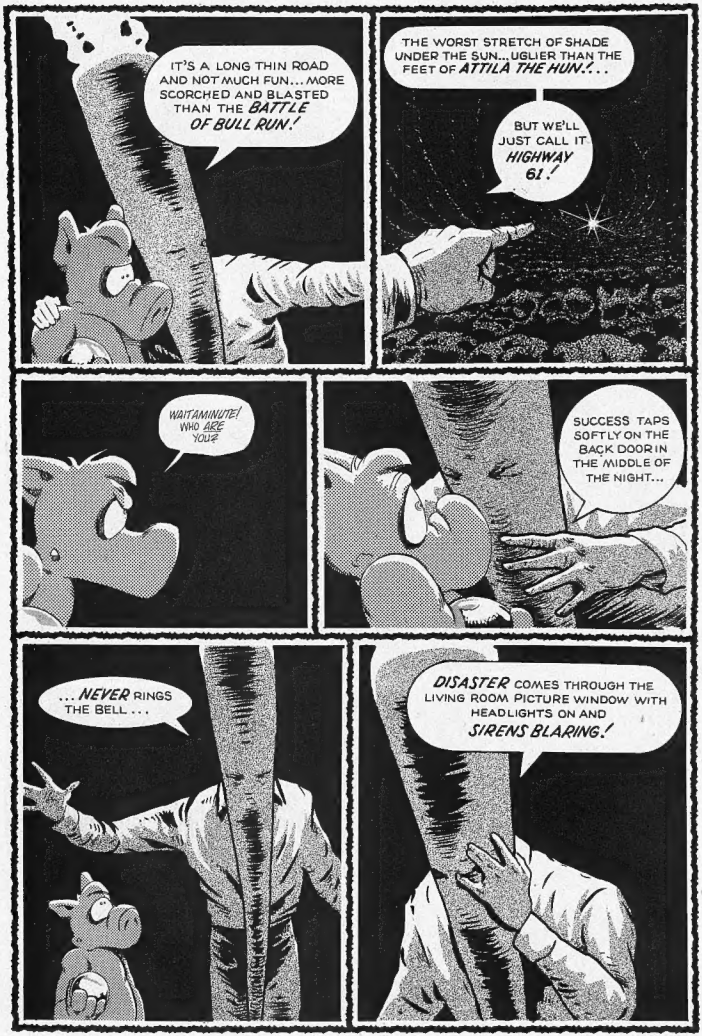
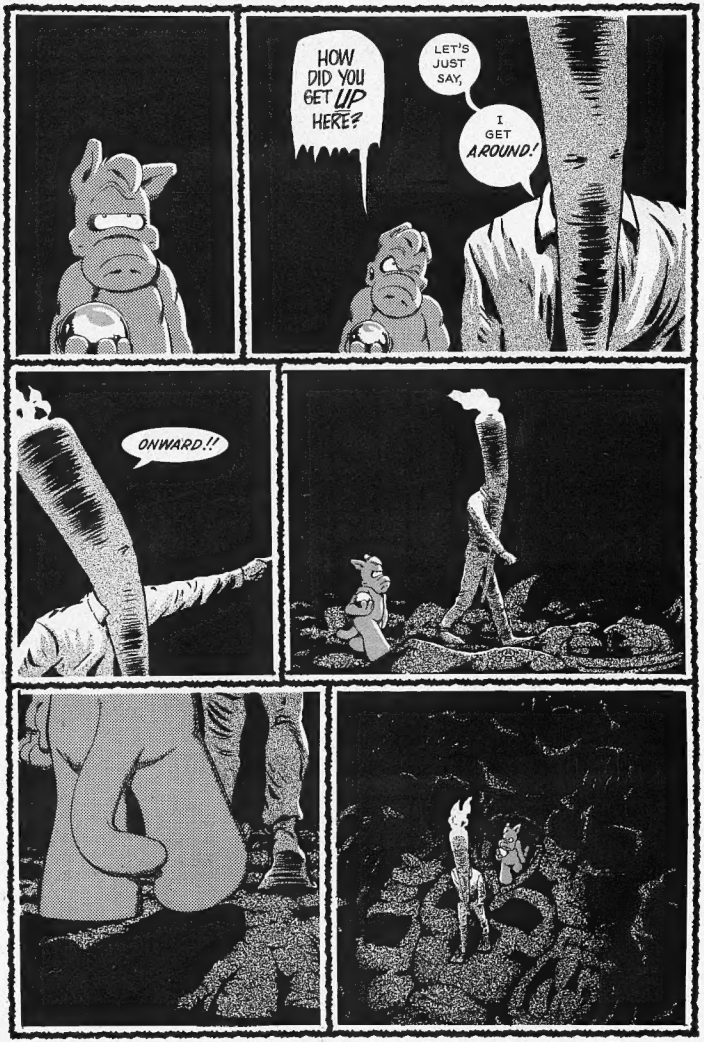
EARNEST NONSENSE
TO THE RESCUE!


HANDY CAN OF NEW IMPROVED "GEORGE-AWAY"
RELIEVES WASHINGTON AND RELATED SYMPTOMS.!
WIDE NOZZLE ACTION.!
JUST MELTS AWAY.!...
LIKE BACTINE.!
...BUT BETTER.!
GOOD AS NEW NOW.!

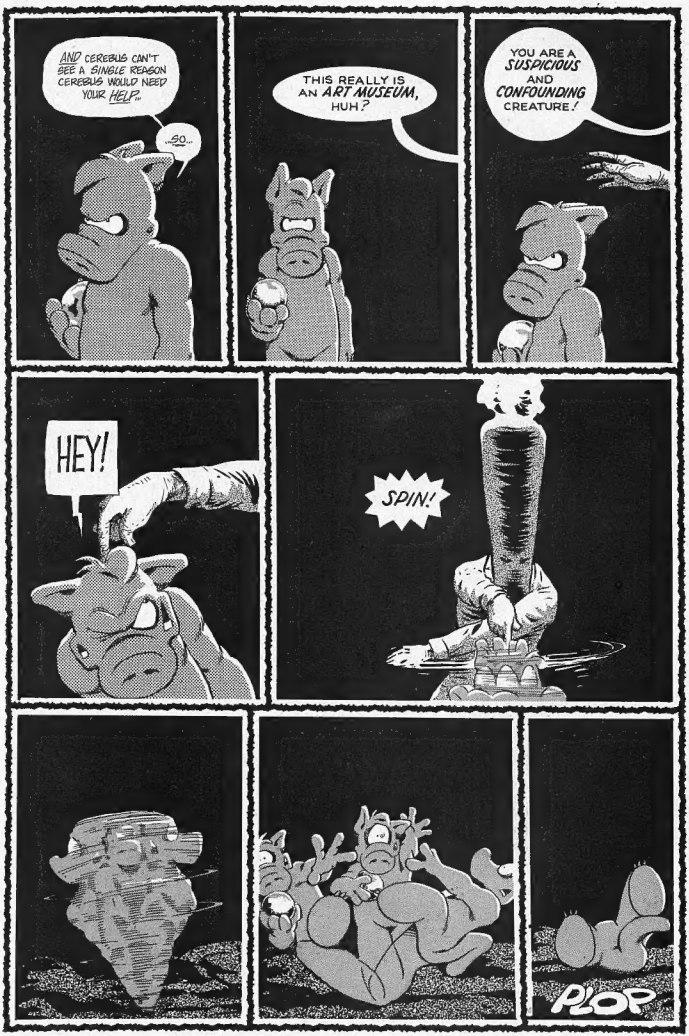

YOU'RE HERE!
WE MUST HURRY NOW!
IT IS A LONG WAY TO THE TOP!
HOW FAR IS IT?
ABOUT TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND MILES...
WHAAT?!
IS OKAY!
WE TAKE SHORT CUT!

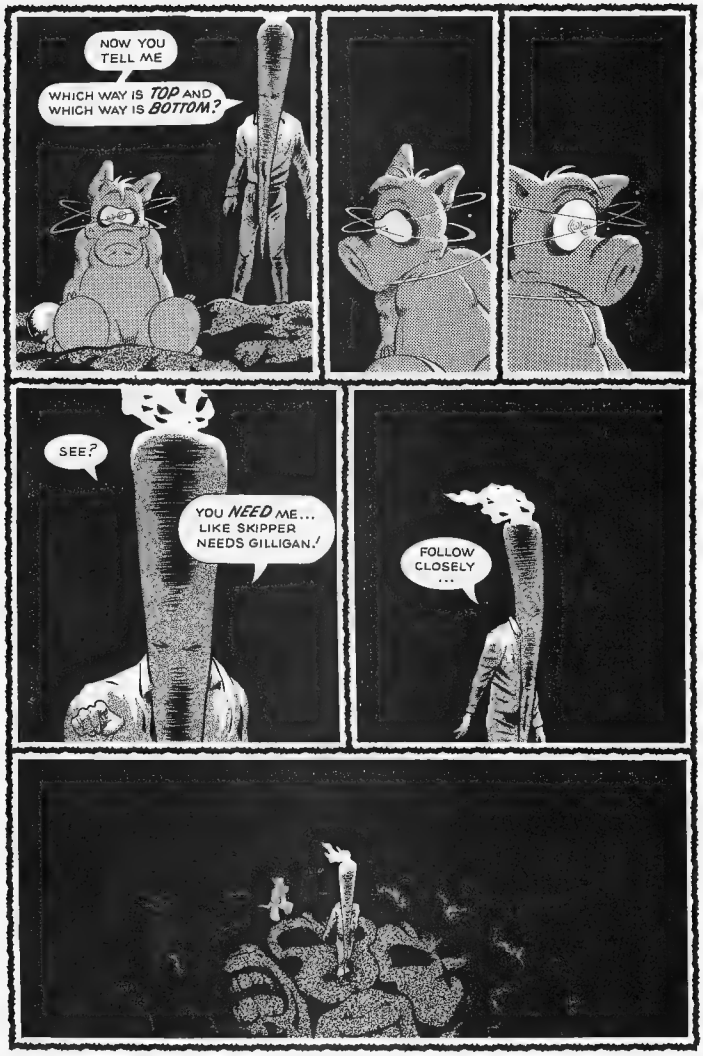

SHORT-CUT?!
WHAT KIND OF A ...

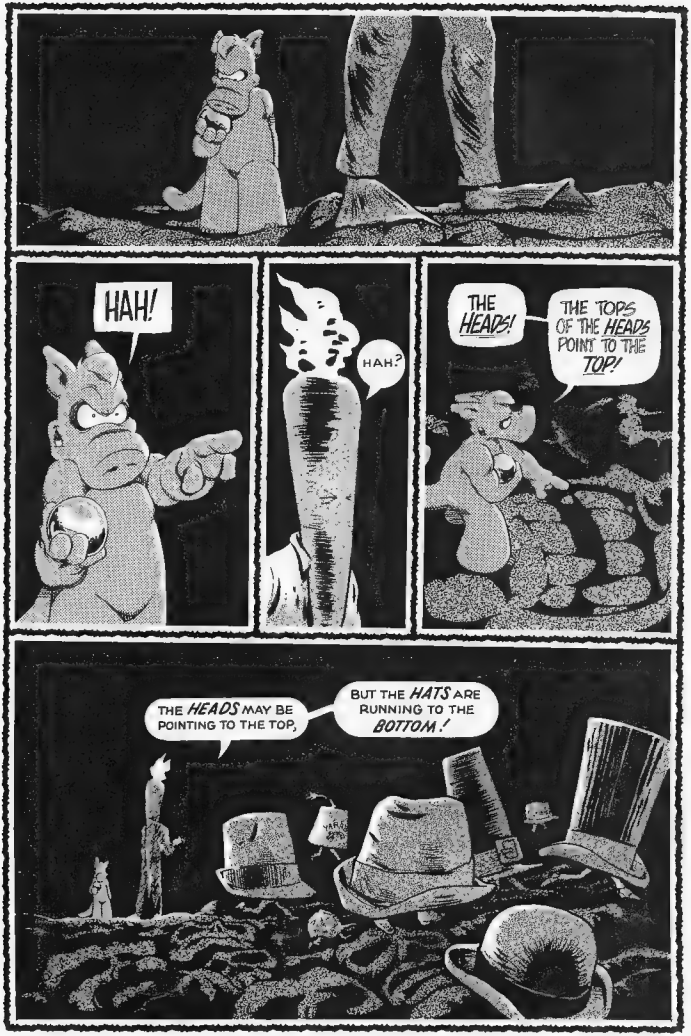

IT'S A LONG THIN ROAD AND NOT MUCH FUN... MORE SCORCHED AND BLASTED THAN THE BATTLE OF BULL RUN!
THE WORST STRETCH OF SHADE UNDER THE SUN...UGLIER THAN THE FEET OF ATTILA THE HUN!...
BUT WE'LL JUST CALL IT HIGHWAY 61!
WAIT A MINUTE! WHO ARE YOU?
SUCCESS TAPS SOFTLY ON THE BACK DOOR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT...
... NEVER RINGS THE BELL ...
DISASTER COMES THROUGH THE LIVING ROOM PICTURE WINDOW WITH HEADLIGHTS ON AND SIRENS BLARING!

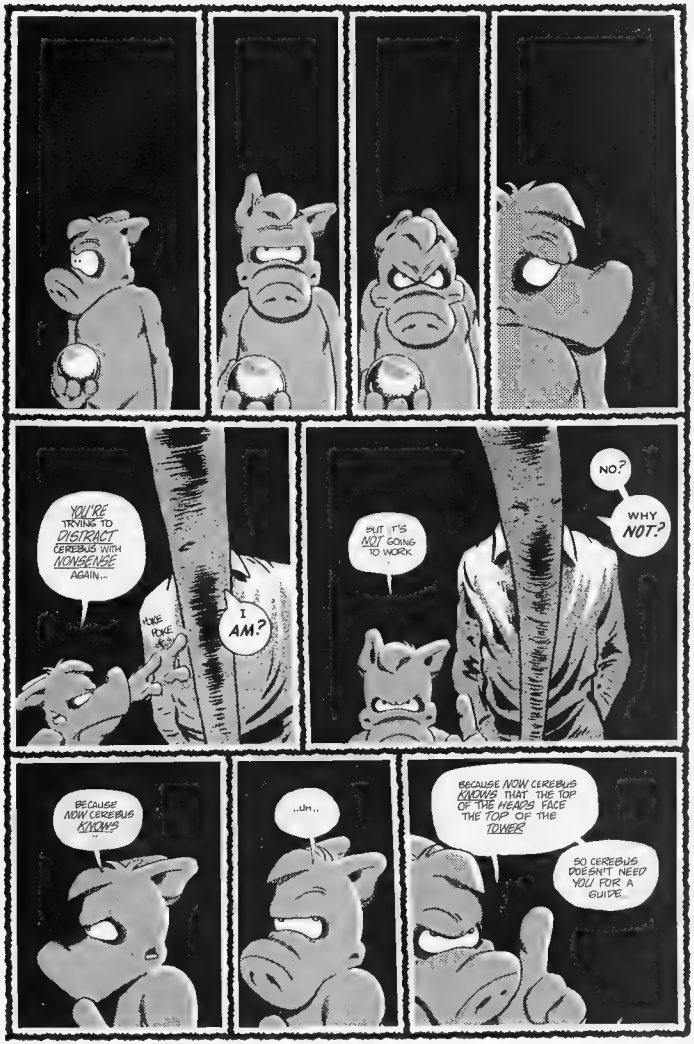

HOW DID YOU GET UP HERE?
LET'S JUST SAY,
I GET AROUND!
ONWARD!!

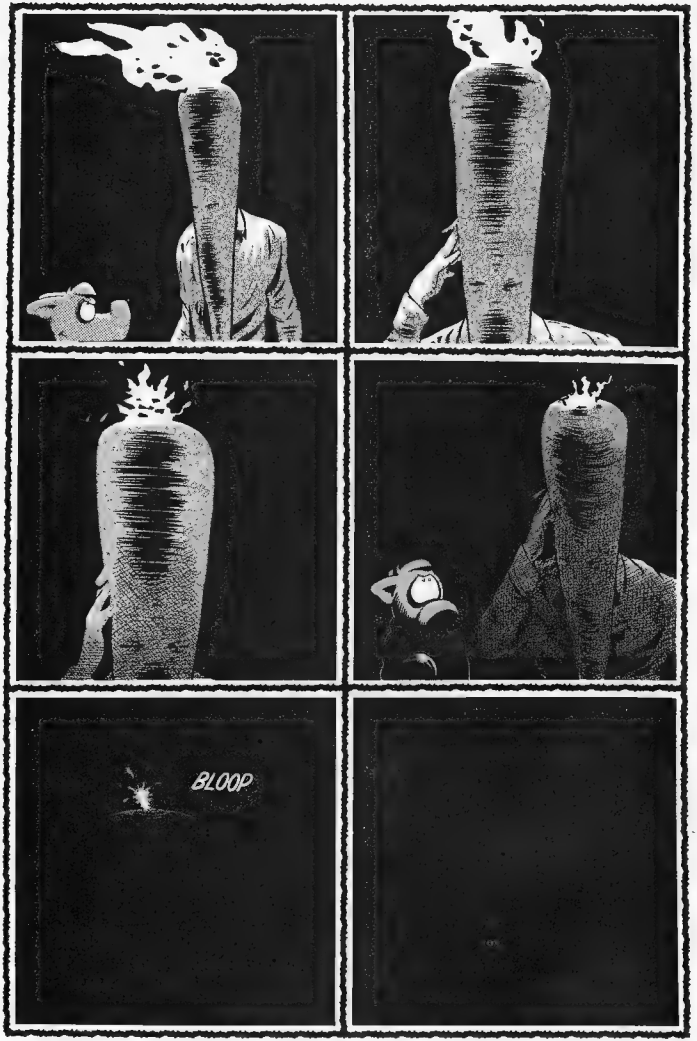
HOLD IT.
WHOA!
BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER...
CEREBUS HAS SOMETHING TO SAY..
SIT DOWN
SITTING IS OKAY TOO...
LOOK! CEREBUS DOESN'T KNOW EVEN YOU ARE...
CEREBUS DOESN'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING IN THE BLACK TOWER
TOWER!!
I THOUGHT IT WAS A DEPARTMENT STORE!
CEREBUS DOESN'T CARE WHO YOU ARE
CEREBUS DOESN'T CARE WHAT YOU'RE DOING IN THE BLACK TOWER...

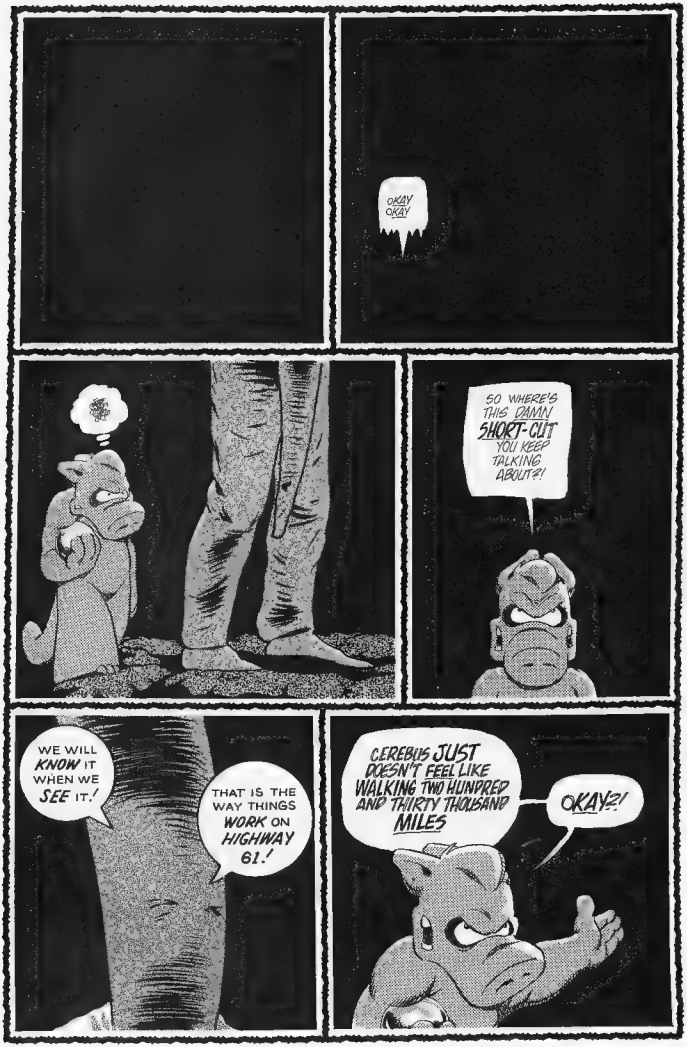

AND CEREBUS CAN'T SEE A SINGLE REASON CEREBUS WOULD NEED YOUR HELP...
...SO...
THIS REALLY IS AN ART MUSEUM, HUH?
YOU ARE A SUSPICIOUS AND CONFOUNDING CREATURE!
HEY!
SPIN!
PLOP

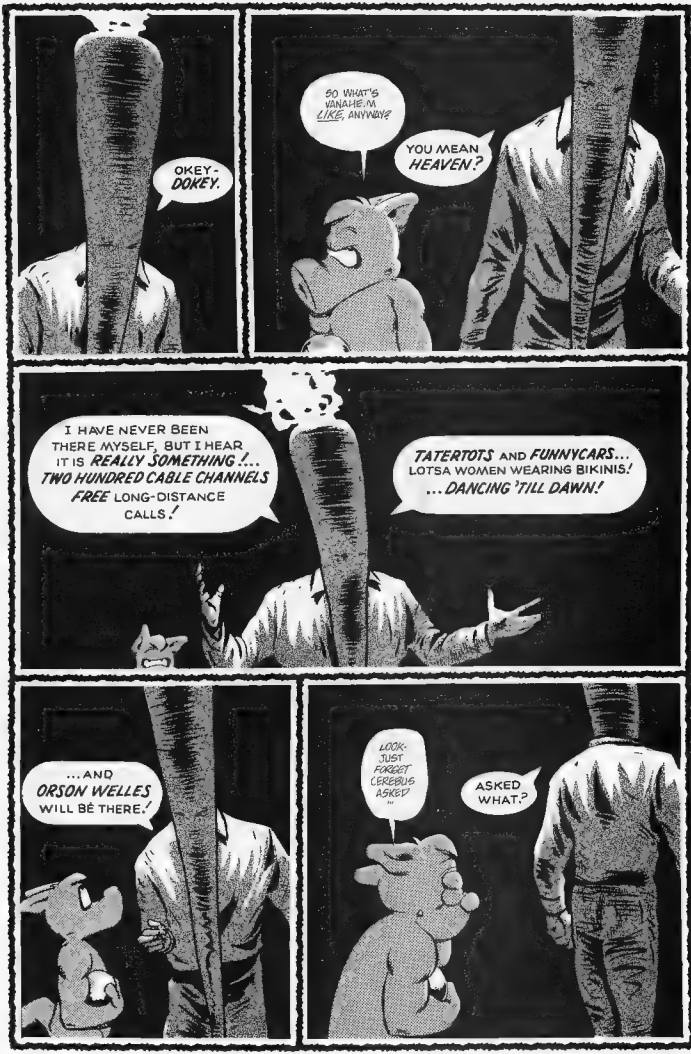

NOW YOU TELL ME
WHICH WAY IS TOP AND WHICH WAY IS BOTTOM?
SEE?
YOU NEED ME... LIKE SKIPPER NEEDS GILLIGAN!
FOLLOW CLOSELY ...

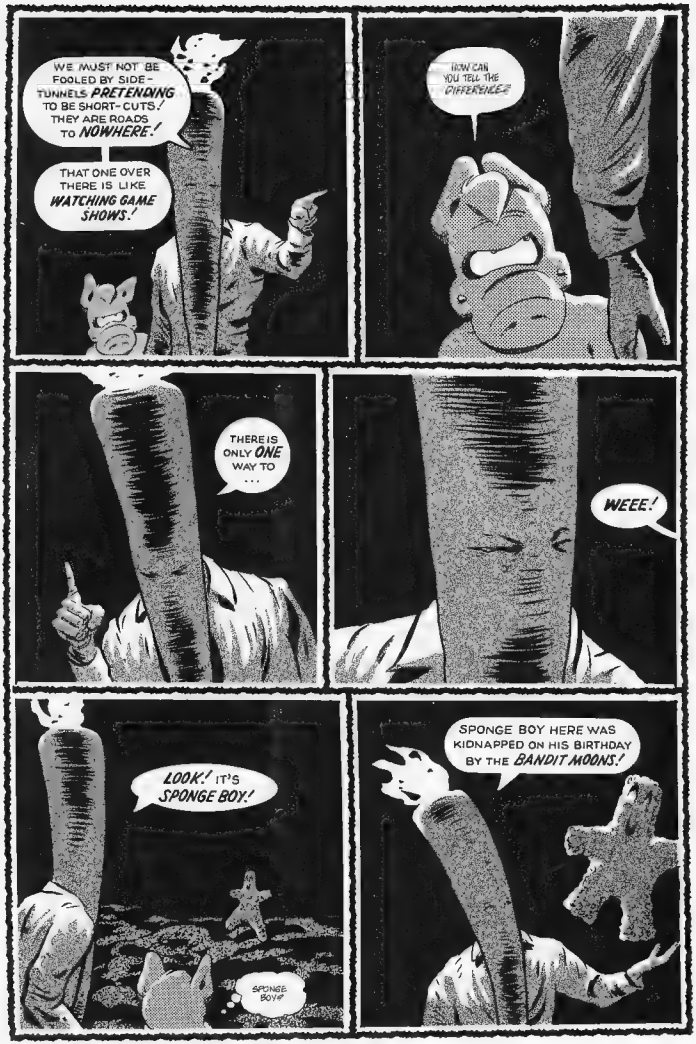

HAH!
HAH?
THE HEADS!
THE TOPS OF THE HEADS POINT TO THE TOP!
THE HEADS MAY BE POINTING TO THE TOP,
BUT THE HATS ARE RUNNING TO THE BOTTOM!

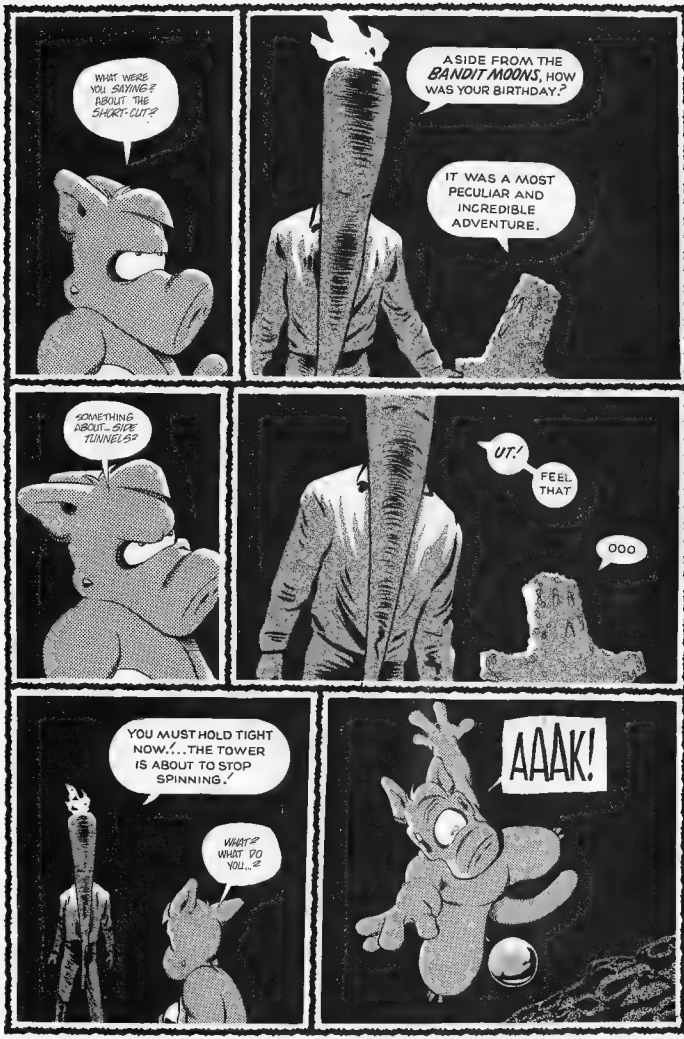

YOU'RE TRYING TO DISTRACT CEREBUS WITH NONSENSE AGAIN...
POKE POKE
I AM?
BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK
NO?
WHY NOT.?
BECAUSE NOW CEREBUS KNOWS
..UH..
BECAUSE NOW CEREBUS KNOWS THAT THE TOP OF THE HEADS FACE THE TOP OF THE TOWER
SO CEREBUS DOESN'T NEED YOU FOR A GUIDE.

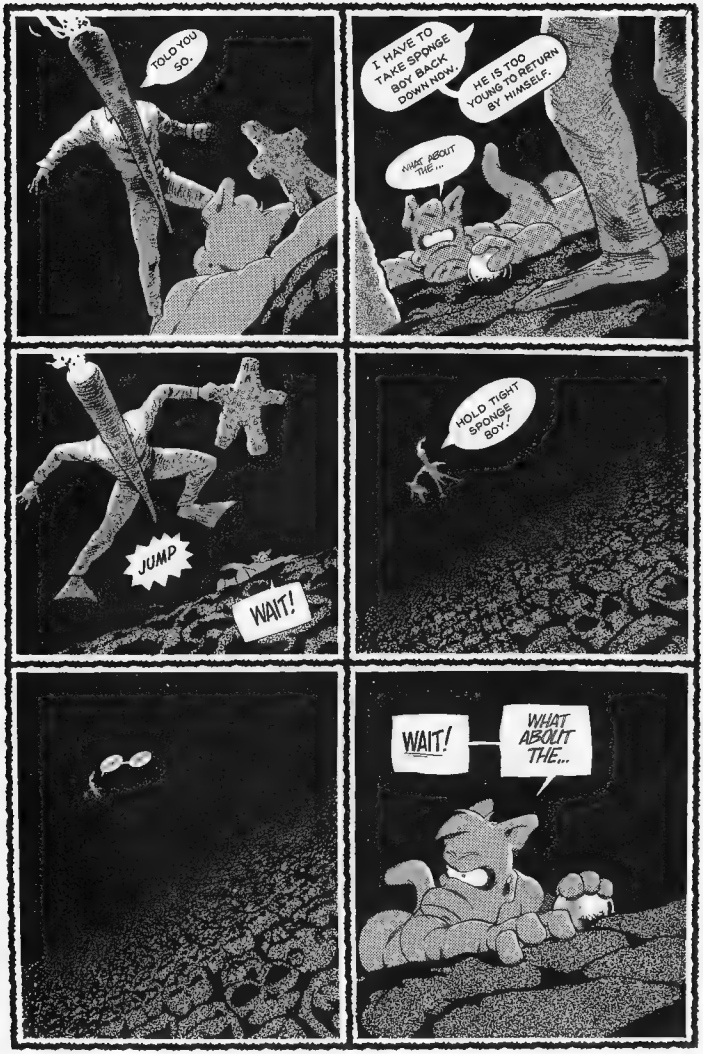

BLOOP


OKAY OKAY
SO WHERE'S THIS DAMN SHORT-CUT YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT?!
WE WILL KNOW IT WHEN WE SEE IT.!
THAT IS THE WAY THINGS WORK ON HIGHWAY 61.!
CEREBUS JUST DOESN'T FEEL LIKE WALKING TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND MILES
OKAY?!


OKEY-DOKEY.
SO WHAT'S YAHAVE.N LIKE, ANYWAY?
YOU MEAN HEAVEN?
I HAVE NEVER BEEN THERE MYSELF, BUT I HEAR IT IS REALLY SOMETHING!... TWO HUNDRED CABLE CHANNELS FREE LONG-DISTANCE CALLS!
TATERTOTS AND FUNNYCARS... LOTSA WOMEN WEARING BIKINIS! ...DANCING 'TILL DAWN!
...AND ORSON WELLES WILL BE THERE!
LOOK- JUST FORGET CEREBUS ASKED!
ASKED WHAT?


WE MUST NOT BE FOOLED BY SIDE-TUNNELS PRETENDING TO BE SHORT-CUTS! THEY ARE ROADS TO NOWHERE!
THAT ONE OVER THERE IS LIKE WATCHING GAME SHOWS!
HOW CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO ...
WEEE!
LOOK! IT'S SPONGE BOY!
SPONGE BOY?
SPONGE BOY HERE WAS KIDNAPPED ON HIS BIRTHDAY BY THE BANDIT MOONS!


WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT THE SHORT-CUT?
ASIDE FROM THE BANDIT MOONS, HOW WAS YOUR BIRTHDAY?
IT WAS A MOST PECULIAR AND INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE.
SOMETHING ABOUT... SIDE TUNNELS?
UT!
FEEL THAT
OOO
YOU MUST HOLD TIGHT NOW!... THE TOWER IS ABOUT TO STOP SPINNING!
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU...?
AAAK!


TOLD YOU SO.
I HAVE TO TAKE SPONGE BOY BACK DOWN NOW.
HE IS TOO YOUNG TO RETURN BY HIMSELF.
WHAT ABOUT THE...
JUMP
WAIT!
HOLD TIGHT SPONGE BOY!
WAIT!
WHAT ABOUT THE...

...SHORT-CUT.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

My Dear, dear, dear, dearest Dave.....

YOU PISS ME OFF!!!!!!

Yeah, you piss me off royally! And d'you know why? Huh? Do you? Because you left me and a thousand other slobs mulling around inside a toaster oven stuffed with a thousand other slobs, lugging around a 30-pound complete set of CEREBUS for you to bloody sign!! I lined up for two damn hours behind a thousand other slobs for you to sign those books, but you didn't did you? You didn't even show up. (For you laymen out there, Dave Sim was supposed to appear at the TORONTO CHARITY COMIC CON on Aug. 30.) And what's your excuse Sim? A busty blonde Bimbo? Partake of artificial stimuli? Soused? Or just too plain stuck-up to be seen with us peasant commoners?

This is the first time I have heard that you'd come to Toronto for something other than having a good time (the only other time is when you go to the nightclub on top of the C-bloody N Tower) and it would've been the first time for me to meet a real demi-god, my idol! (Yes, I'm talking about you, asshole.) I've been practicing for days in front of a mirror what I was going to say to you, and I ended up having to use it on my mother. Just for that I'm going to delay the construction of a solid-silver CEREBUS shrine in my room and firebomb your house.

Y'know, if you hadn't donated so many neat things to the charity auction, this would almost be forgivable. Yes, I still think you're a conceited yuppie, but if I wasn't so sure you were drunk, I would do more than just slash your tires.

Remember Dave, alcohol kills, but so do fans that own guns.

I've thought a lot about this letter since I received it.

People wonder why I don't do signings any more -- or interviews or conventions or whatever. Essentially it is because so much of it is bogus and depressing and annoying. I don't have a boss. I wake up when I want to, I go to sleep when I want to, I work when I want to. If I don't want to do something, I don't do it.

Suddenly, at a convention, there is a great deal expected of me, particularly by the chaps who show up hauling a suitcase with their complete collection of Cerebus, all the issues of Epic magazine with young Cerebus, Oktoberfest, Quack, Phantacea, the colour portfolio -- and quite often a duplicate set owned by a friend who "couldn't make it today" (mm.. Pity...). They also usually have forty or fifty copies of one issue(Cerebus Jam or #100 or #50 or some such) that they bought as an investment. The easiest way for them to double their investment is to corner me and get me to sign every one of them (Cerebus Jam #1 NM <30 copies> <signed> $7.50). To their way of thinking, they spent all last night taking two hundred and fifty books out of plastic bags, securely packing them in a suitcase so they don't get "un-minted" and hauling the lot by train and subway to wherever I happen to be. They arrive bound and determined that they are going to walk away with two hundred and fifty autographs (and seventy-five from Gerhard), and a sketch of Cerebus, Lord Julius and the Regency Elf inked with a Gerhard background of the Regency which they are willing to pay up to fifteen dollars for.

If I don't have time to do it at the Con, I can get their address, do it when I get home and mail it to them no later than Tuesday.

For the information of our correspondent, I <u>was</u> at the convention. I did not arrive until almost four o'clock and I stayed until six o'clock. Having gotten whatever thrill there is to be had from answering the same question five times, (being told I'm a demi-god, writing my name several hundred times, etc.) a long time ago, I refuse to spend all day at a convention. Any convention.

During and after the Charity Auction, I sat on the edge of the stage and autographed every Cerebus comic that was handed to me. I answered every question I could hear. After an hour and some minutes, there was no one left asking for autographs, no questions left to answer, so Gerhard, Rose, Zolastraya and I left and went downtown for a nice dinner. I was a little frazzled, but not burnt-out and I would venture to say I had as close to a good time as I ever have at a comic book convention.

But, it is exactly this sort of letter that makes me question the wisdom of going to cons. I mean, it comes down to sitting there saying to myself "What am I <u>doing</u> here?" The charity events seem to me proper justification. However annoyed or

trapped or besieged I get to feeling, it is in the name of a good cause.

But, when people start in on the Dave the Druggie, Dave the Alcoholic, Dave the 'Ego-maniac...

When people refer to me as a demi-god and an asshole in the same sentence...

When people talk about "fans that (sic) own guns".

Charity or no charity, I feel like staying home.

The return address was T. Woo, Unionville, Ontario.

If anyone knows the guy; please. Tell him to give his head a shake.

Please.

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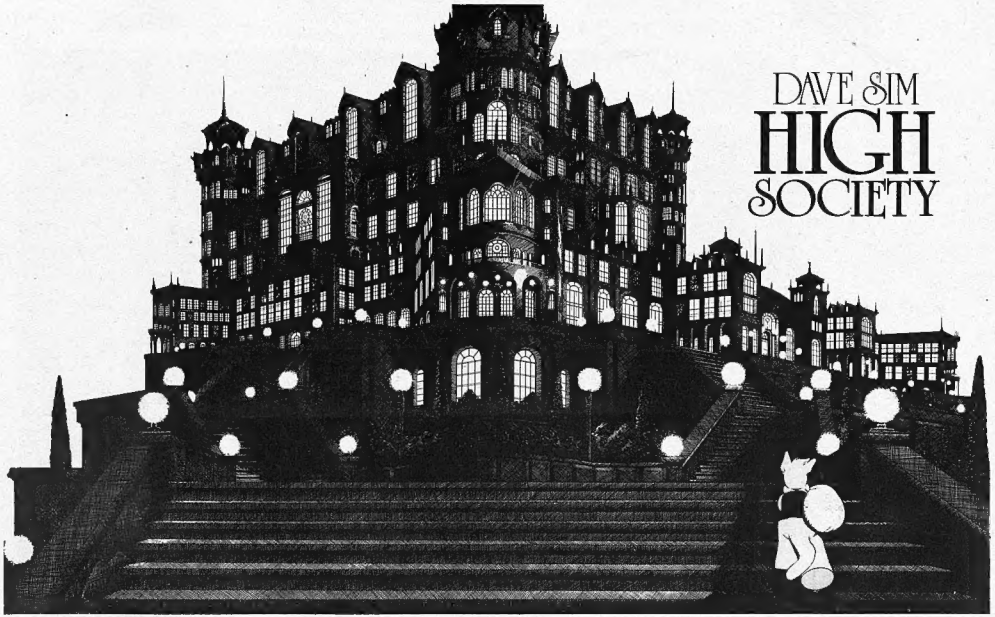

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